CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE DEPOSITING OF SOUTH AFRICA'S INSTRUMENT OF RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND THEIR DESTRUCTION

South Africa on 26 June 1998 deposited its Instrument of Ratification to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction at the Office of the Secretary General of the United Nations in New York. The deposit of the Instrument of Ratification follows the earlier ratification of the convention by the South African Parliament in May 1998.

South Africa signed the Convention on 3 December 1997 in Ottawa and 124 States, 38 of which are from Africa, have signed the Convention thus far. The Convention will enter into force after 40 ratifications. To date 21 States have ratified the Convention.

On 18 September 1997, the Oslo Diplomatic Conference on an International Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Landmines adopted the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In terms of the Convention State Parties will be obligated not only to ban the use of anti-personnel mines but also to ensure their destruction. With the final phase of the destruction of its stockpiled anti-personnel mines in October 1997, South Africa fulfilled its obligation in terms of this Convention.

South Africa is committed to the earliest possible entry into force of the Convention and will be promoting the universality of the Convention as the international norm in banning such mines. South Africa will do its utmost to contribute to the removal of landmines, especially in the region, and provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and the social and economic interaction, of mine victims.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
PRETORIA
29 JUNE 1998

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MEDIA STATEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA'S DECLARATION OF CONSENT TO BE BOUND TO PROTOCOL II, AS AMENDED, AND PROTOCOL IV OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OR RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED TO BE EXCESSIVELY INJURIOUS OR TO HAVE INDISCRIMINATE EFFECTS (CCW)

South Africa declared its Consent to be bound to Protocol II, as amended, and Protocol IV of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects, commonly known as the CCW. This declaration was deposited at the Office of the Secretary General of the United Nations in New York on 26 June 1998.

South Africa acceded to this Convention and its Protocols I, II and III, on 13 September 1995. The Convention, which was concluded in 1980, was opened for signature by all Member States of the United Nations for a period of twelve months from 10 April 1981. The Convention came into force on 2 December 1983 and currently has been ratified by 70 States.

The objective of the Convention is to prohibit the use of the above-mentioned weapons which have indiscriminately caused death and injury to millions of people world-wide including innocent civilians.

The Convention includes the Treaty and four Protocols entitled respectively:

- Protocol on Non-detectable Fragments (I)
- Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices (II)
- Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Incendiary Weapons (III)
- Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons (IV)

Protocol II is the most substantive of the four Protocols to the Convention and deals with mines, booby-traps and other devices which have been used indiscriminately in a large number of recent conflicts, particularly internal conflicts. It is for this reason that State Parties decided to convene a Review Conference in 1995 to amend the Protocol and render its provisions more restrictive as well as consider the adoption of a new Protocol IV on Blinding Laser Weapons. The new Protocol IV was adopted on 13 October 1995 and the amended Protocol II was adopted on 3 May 1996.

The scope of Protocol II, as amended, has been extended to include conflicts of a non-international character, a significant improvement given that most landmines are used in internal conflicts. In addition the general humanitarian restrictions are stronger, requiring greater discrimination between civilian and

military objectives requiring advance warning of mines, booby-traps and other devices.

The new Protocol IV places a prohibition on the use of such blinding laser weapons which are designed to cause blindness.

This declaration emphasises the South African Government's commitment to promote international peace and security, to limit and alleviate the suffering which is concomitant to the scourges of war and armed conflict and its responsibility to implement arms control policies as a vehicle to this end.

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